Doubletalk

COLIN

Vol. 1, No. 1 The newsletter of The Friends of Tom and Colin Baker June 1987

TUBE ALERT!

The Disney Channel is currently airing a BBC program entitled ***Swallows and Amazons Forever! Coot Club***, a children's adventure story in which Colin plays a doctor (surprise!) who is the father of one of the young heroes of the story. He has only half a dozen lines in one three-minute scene, but you may want to tune in anyway because it's a charming story, which may be of particular interest to bird lovers. Air dates include July 14, 22 and 25; check your local schedule for times.

Why Harry is wild about crisps

Daily Mail, London (June 2, 1987)

HARRY the hedgehog was in safe hands yesterday.

And happily for actor Colin Baker he felt quite relaxed about it all.

The former Dr Who star and his little friend came face to face to celebrate good news for the country's only hedgehog hospital – St Tiggywinkle's in Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire.

The makers of Hedgehog Flavour Crisps had donated £1,000 for food for the hospital, run by Les and Sue Stocker in their back garden.

Hedgehogs are notoriously prickly eaters and the Stockers discovered that while they prefer insects, dog food goes down equally well.

The Wildlife Hospital Trust – of which Colin Baker is vice-president – was established as a charity four years ago and treats up to 2,000 animals annually.

Hedgehog Foods, Welshpool, Shropshire, decided to help because of self-confessed 'vested interest'. Crisp-eaters sent in empty packets and the company donated about 15 pence for every batch of 20.

Harry meanwhile, need have no fear about ulterior motives. The Office of Fair Trading cracked down on hedgehog crisps three years ago – because they didn't contain any hedgehog. They still don't. They're potatoes with 'herby pork' flavouring.'

Picture: MIKE HOLLIST

CORPSE! HEADS WEST

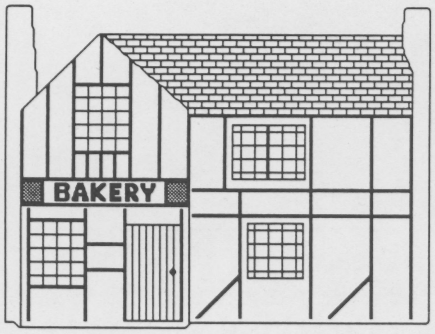
To the West End, that is! Colin reports that after the final two weeks of its tour (June 29-July 4 at the Theatre Royal in Bath and July 6-11 at the Theatre Royal in Richmond), *Corpse!* will move to the Strand Theatre in London for ten weeks beginning July 13th. Do try to see it if you're heading that way this summer--it's great fun overall, and especially delightful to observe the skill with which Colin switches from playing one twin to the other and then back again... and again... and again....

Shortly after *Corpse!* opened Colin reported: "The first night was somewhat fraught as I sliced my thumb fairly severely instead of the onion and both Evelyn and Rupert were fairly blood-stained as a result--as was the set, the costumes, etc. Since then it has gotten a little better--it *could* only get better!--although we are used to malfunctioning guns, sets that don't revolve, pictures that don't smash, and lights that go on and off at mysterious times!"

The *Corpse!* program asks that the plot not be divulged for the enjoyment for future audiences, but if you would like to know more about it the play has been published by Samuel French Ltd. Copies may be obtained through either of their two U.S. outlets: 7623 Sunset Blvd., Hollywood, CA 90046; or 45 W. 25th Street, New York, NY 10010.

TIMECON UPDATE:

For those of you who have planned to come to Timecon to see Colin... never fear, he's still coming! He has arranged to take time off from *Corpse!* to attend the convention, which will be held in San Jose July 31-August 2. For more info call (408) 629-8078 or write to: Timecon '87, 124-H Blossom Hill Road, San Jose, CA 95123.



Shoppe Talk

Dear Friends,

I've individually thanked as many of you as possible for the support you've provided regarding the expansion of the club to include Colin, but the task quickly became overwhelming and I hope the rest of you will understand if I take this opportunity to express my gratitude *en masse*. I've received only seven or eight complaints, and have been delighted to discover how many of you are as enthusiastic about the prospect of reading about Colin as I am about working to provide you with that reading matter!

Our newsletter has not only a new name (no, Colin -- ***not*** *The Baker Bugle*!) but also a new look, thanks to a Stanford professor I work for who has been extremely generous about sharing her Macintosh Plus computer. This issue was composed using Microsoft Word, MacPaint, and Aldus' Pagemaker desktop publishing software, and printed on an Apple LaserWriter. Don't be surprised if *Doubletalk's* format continues to change a bit as I learn more about the capabilities of this marvelous equipment!

Just to set the record straight, in the last issue everything situated between the "Among Fiends" masthead (dated April 1) and the statement about returning you to our regular programming was just a figment of the overactive imaginations of a few of us... Tom proclaimed our April Foolery "deadpan and clever," and Colin has said that he doesn't mind such spoofery either, so consider yourselves forewarned that a similar effort will probably be forthcoming next spring!

I've not yet addressed the subject of the division of newsletter space between Tom and Colin, and this seems like an appropriate time to do so since a few of you have mentioned that it's a source of concern to you. I present the available news in a way which I hope you will find entertaining and informative, and which I hope will also meet with Tom's and Colin's approval. My intention is to divide the available space as equally as possible between the two of them, but please try to understand that there may be some disparity within individual issues because it's unlikely that there will be identical amounts of news available about each of them during the period of time covered by any one issue. Also, while we've already presented all the information we've been able to find regarding Tom's career, we now have *all* of Colin's to catch up on! (For those of you who have asked, a list of Colin's professional credits is being compiled and we hope to be able to print it in the next issue--the December issue at the latest.)

I've recently returned from a ten-day trip to England and am pleased to report that both Tom and Colin were looking happy and healthy, doing well in their respective roles, and giving new meaning to the word "busy"!

I imagine most of you will agree that TFOTACB is just *too* much of a mouthful! How about referring to ourselves as FTCB from now on?

Must dash or this will never get to the printer! Thanks again, everybody...

Laurie

PANTO 1987/88!

Colin will play Blackbeard the Pirate in *Robinson Crusoe* at the Wimbledon Theatre (outer London) this Christmas. The cast also includes Rula Lenska (in the title role) and Roy Kinnear. It will run from December 18 to February 7.

Where to write to Colin:

Colin Baker
Box 216
High Wycombe
Buckinghamshire HP14 3PA
U.K.

CONVENTION ALERT!

Colin plans to attend **Ode to the Time Lord and Master**, a convention sponsored by The National Right To Time Travel Association, to be held September 19-20 in Washington, D.C. Other scheduled guests include Anthony Ainley, John Levine, Gerry Davis, Janet Fielding, and Eric Hoffman. For more info, the NRTT's address is: P.O. Box 90802, Washington, DC 20090.

CATS (NOT THE PLAY!)

Colin and his family recently adopted *three* kittens, rather than two as discussed in the interview on the next page. Colin says Marion thought they should get two so they could keep each other company, but it turned out that would have meant leaving a third kitten all by itself, so... There were already four cats in residence (Wee, Pickles, Eric and Morris), so the new additions bring the total feline population at Colin's house to seven...the same as Tom's, at last count. (Is this a contest, guys?!) One of the new kittens, a fluffy tortoiseshell, is called Mog; the other two are black and as of June 18th had not been named.

KEEPING BUSY...

Colin has made numerous personal appearances during the *Corpse!* tour. He has participated in the opening ceremony for a special telephone booth for the handicapped, drawn winning names in a lottery and also in a charity raffle to benefit kidney patients, picked the winner of a competition for hand-made quilts, and presented awards to children who had won various competitions. He also took part in a charity punt to benefit cot death research, accompanied by a three-piece band called The Froggits who played standing up in the punt. "And no one fell in!"

Last but not least: "This week's great achievement has been a chopstick competition at a Chinese restaurant here in Hull, where contrary to my expectation I was the night's winner with 12 slippery Chinese mushrooms picked up vertically in 30 seconds!" After the event, which was in celebration of Dragon Boat festival, the owner of the restaurant is reported to have commented, "Sir, you're a true Chinaman!"

The Good Doctor travels back in time

Actor Colin Baker made his first ever professional stage appearance at the Arts Theatre in Cambridge, in May 1969. Eighteen years later, he has been paying his first return visit, something of an overlong gap for a celebrated time traveller.

Ruth Sealey's TV FOCUS

A TRIO of rather self-conscious sixth-form schoolboys approached the table in the Arts Theatre coffee bar in Cambridge, where actor Colin Baker was sitting.

"My friend says you are Dr Who," said their spokesman, clearly wishing to duck any responsibility for the intrusion.

The friend was right. Up to a point. For Colin Baker, is, and always will be, television's sixth Dr Who. But after three years, and two stints as the celebrated Time Lord, the BBC has called time on this particular Doctor.

A new face will take over in the autumn, leaving Colin as the shortest-lived incumbent to date.

The popular long-running sci-fi series has had something of a troubled ride in recent years. A ride in which the BBC's Director of Programmes, Michael Grade, has come to rival Dr Who's arch-enemy, The Master, as villain of the piece — certainly in the eyes of Colin Baker.

"The first thing he did when he arrived was to cancel my second season," said Colin, who was reprieved, amid much public outcry. "I don't think he realised he had caught a tiger by the tail when he took on Dr Who."

Currently on tour, playing identical twins in the stage comedy thriller "Corpse," Colin did not exactly give up playing Dr Who gracefully. Telling what happened when he was asked to appear in four more episodes to facilitate the hand-over to the new Dr Who, he said: "I told them to roll it up in a brown paper bag and do the suitable thing with it, I'm afraid.

"I've always believed you've got to be honest and stand up for yourself."

All of which may make him sound rather more bitter than he really is. He had

Colin as the Time Lord.

Real tragedy makes dimensions relative for sci-fi actor . . .

"great fun" as Dr Who, he says, successfully bringing some of his own ideas to the character he saw as "larger than life and alien, a bit unpredictable, a bit crotchety — I wanted to give him a kind of literary bent. He was always spouting quotations, and being sometimes overbearingly pompous, but with a good heart."

And even being an ex-Dr Who has its compensations. He still gets lots of fan mail — he answered 200 letters last week, and in July he is off to another Dr Who convention in America, where there is a huge cult following. There is also a special Bakers fan club, specifically for himself and fellow actor Tom Baker, who held the role for seven years.

Snatched away

But if Colin is philosophical about it all, it is because he also has a tragic, personal reason for keeping any ups and downs in his working life firmly in perspective.

Four years ago his baby son Jack died a cot death, aged seven weeks. But since then, happily, he and his 31-year-old actress wife, Marion Wyatt, have produced a daughter, Lucy, who at two is now the apple of her father's eye. But the experience has naturally left its scars.

"Having lost a son when you waited 40 years to have one, suddenly to have that snatched away when it never occurs to you that that is going to happen, it doesn't half put the rest of life into perspective.

"I mean this stupid job I do, this standing up in the evening and pretending to be someone else, it doesn't make it seem trivial and unimportant, but it puts it in its right place. I still want to do it to earn my living, and I still want people to want me to do it, but if it is taken away from me tomorrow I'll go and run a corner shop without it actually breaking my heart. Because my heart was broken on that previous occasion in a sense.

"It has also brought myself and my wife much closer together. We were close anyway, but it can drive people apart. I've heard of stories where husbands and wives have blamed each other and it has ruined the marriage."

It is his second marriage. The first was to actress Lisa Goddard, his co-star in the compulsive BBC Sunday series of the seventies, "The Brothers."

Colin Baker: "You've got to stand up for yourself." Picture: Dave Parfitt.

Longer memories

Colin may be "Dr Who" to a whole new younger generation of viewers, but to fans with longer memories he is still the ruthless young Paul Merroney, who never let his emotions get in the way of business. While he won the curious accolade of being voted the most hated man in Britain, according to a poll in one tabloid newspaper at the time, Colin thinks Merroney was misunderstood. "He wasn't like JR," he still insists.

Home for Colin is in Buckinghamshire, with Marion, Lucy, two dogs and four cats, one of them blind. Two kittens are due to be added to this menagerie, as soon as they are old enough to leave their mother. They are for Lucy, and names (Jess and Mog) have already been chosen.

Colin even managed to introduce his cats into Dr Who, by sporting a selection of cat badges, three of which had been modelled on his own cats. Perhaps Michael Grade is a dog-lover . . .

Cambridge News (May 22, 1987)

THE STARS, Colin Baker (left) and Jack Watling in a scene from the current production, "Corpse" at the Churchill Theatre, Bromley. It opened on April 8 and runs until April 25.

The Leader, Bromley
(April 17, 1987)

Wolverhampton Chronicle
(May 15, 1987)

Baker's superb double

GREAT skill and careful planning is important in theatre if an actor is be convincing when playing the dual role of twin brothers.

In this, Colin Baker is superb in the lead role(s) of Corpse, which is showing at the Grand Theatre, Wolverhampton.

He plays both Farrants — the down-and-out Evelyn, who is plotting to murder his wealthy twin, and twin Rupert.

Evelyn calls on the expertise of One Shot Wally McGee, a wily character, stylishly played by Jack Watling, to kill Rupert.

The plot is laid as Baker shows off his culinary ability by cooking — and eating — a Russian pancake on stage. It smelled delicious.

The plan starts to collapse (or does it?) and both brothers get caught in the crossfire.

The contrast between the twins is further reinforced by Alan Tagg's magnificent back-to-back revolving set.

Half is Evelyn's dingy cellar flat. This turns to show Rupert's ritzy penthouse suite.

Colin Baker turns in a brilliantly convincing performance.

He and Jack Watling play out a realistic duel, the timing reflecting the precision of this show, which runs until tomorrow (Saturday).

London Daily News
(April 13, 1987)

Who dunnit . . is it the doctor?

Eastern Evening News, Norwich
(June 2, 1987)

Mr Moon's double ingenuity

NOBEL prizes don't grow on trees — not for writers of comedy-thrillers. After watching a performance of Gerald Moon's "Corpse!" with some admiration at the Theatre Royal last night, one is prompted to ask why that should be.

Divulging the plot of this week's attraction is openly discouraged. A picture of a revolver lies under a public warning in the programme. One takes the hint. Besides, the writer is also directing the play, and could be lurking in the vicinity.

Not a happy thought. If Mr Moon put his mind to it, might he not devise another ingenious plot? He may already have done so in Stockton-on-Tees or Wolverhampton. Who knows what the Norwich air might not do for so inventive a brain?

TRICKERY

Suffice it to say, therefore, that like Shakespeare and Fry before him — to name but two — Mr Moon weaves twins into his design. That gives him plenty of scope for trickery and Colin Baker, who plays the brothers, a very exhausting evening in the theatre. It prompts the question, does he get double the money? Perhaps he ought.

As Evelyn Farrant, actor, and Rupert Farrant, business executive, Colin Baker displays both stamina and wide-ranging theatrical skills. His shoulders, however, don't have to take all the strain. The experienced Jack Watling, as the Major, grapples with events and "Not another one!" with dashed good humour. Jean Reeve, playing a stock character, has polished it rather well. Add Robert Meadwell, the PC, and you have a cast and a half.

Don't be foiled. "Corpse!" is not all chills and spills. There's laughter, too. And an amazing set, which won a round of applause last night.

Wembley Observer (April 30, 1987)

Corpse! Beck Theatre, Hayes, until May 2.

IT MIGHT have been more to the point if Gerald Moon had named his comedy-thriller not Corpse but Corpses.

For its plot calls for the stage to be littered with them.

And as if that were not enough there are some notable points about two of them. Each refuses to die and has to be "killed" several times, and both are played by the some person.

Colin Baker — late, if you'll pardon the expression, of Tv's The Brothers and Dr Who — is the actor in question, directed by the author, and he makes of the roles of twins Evelyn and Rupert a theatrical tour de force.

The brothers — one a "resting" actor, the other a wealthy society playboy — are chalk and cheese, and Baker makes an excellent job of the speedy changes of both character and costume needed to portray them.

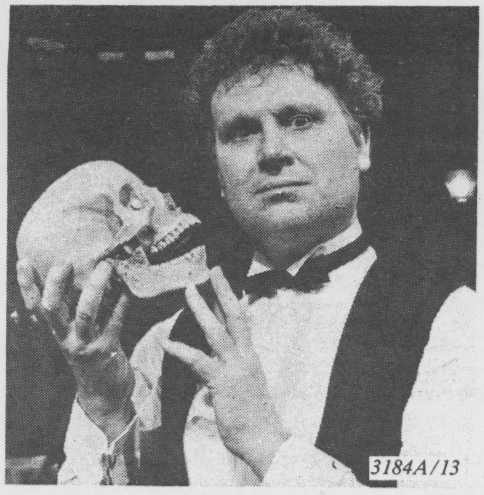
On stage throughout, he has fine support from veteran Jack Watling as the murderous, kleptomanic Major, Jean Reeve and Robert Meadwell.

The clever plot sees murder piled on murder, with the reviving corpses serving to add to audience suspense which lasts right through to the final-scene solution. And even that brings yet another twist.

The Major himself confesses, during the second act, to confusion and in that, thanks to the script and the acting, he was joined by the audience. It all works out in the end. And, by then, it's been a fine night of theatre.

Tickets are £4.50 and £5.50 (box office 561 8371). Performances are at 8pm, with a 5pm matinee on Saturday.

By Barry Sowerby.



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A close shave for Jack Watling at the hands of Colin Baker.

Cutting role for Dr Colin

THE role balancing act performed by Colin Baker in the Churchill's current production of the comedy-thriller "Corpse!" makes Dr Who seem like child's play.

Like watching a juggler spinning plates on poles — just when you think one's going to fall he pops up out of nowhere and keeps it spinning!

Here Mr Baker has the unenviable task of playing twin brothers — set in hatred of each other and simply dying for revenge.

The plot — so thick it almost sets — has been aptly described as having as many twists "as a bent but plucky corkscrew."

Jean Reeve plays Mrs McGee, the endearing landlady with more than just a fancy for the less successful of the brother, Evelyn Farrant.

Her devotions are unfortunately wasted on Evelyn for his upbringing has made him rather camp. "I never knew anyone with so many nephews" she says of his after-dark activities.

Set on the night of King Edward's abdication in December 1936, Evelyn plots to kill his rich brother Rupert

Jack Watling plays the seemingly innocent Major Walter Powell who gets tragically mixed up in the feud between the two brothers.

After the first night's performance Colin Baker may now add kitchen knives to the list of children and animals as things to avoid, for he made the "cutting comedy" live up to its name with an all to real nick on the finger in scene one.

But with some fine performances and some very fast moving by Mr Baker, the play is well worth a visit.

"Corpse!" runs at the Churchill Theatre in Bromley High Street until April 25 — Mondays to Saturdays 7.45 pm and matinees on Thursdays.

The Advertiser, Bromley (April 16, 1987)

Thriller hokum by the hatful

One national newspaper said: "There is always a warm welcome for superlative hokum and here it is by the bucketful.

"A wild high camp comedy thriller . . .a play where anything can happen . . .and most of it does!"

Worthing Gazette (May 15, 1987)

—Baker's double delight—

AS VIRTUOSO performances go, Colin Baker's at the Connaught Theatre will surely not be bettered for a long, long time.

His exacting double role as twin brothers dominates but never swamps the plot-to-kill tension of Gerald Moon's Corpse!

Usual ingredients

This comedy-thriller — performed last week — is justifiably dubbed as 'not so much a whodunnit as a whodunnit to whom!'

It has all the usual ingredients of the genre — shocks, gunshots, twists and turns. But Baker's vitality, a splendid dialogue and a snappy plot elevate it above the typical chiched murder mystery.

Baker — who at one point manages to cook a Russian omlette while hiring someone to kill his twin brother — is on stage throughout as either brother, corpse or supposed corpse. Writer and director Moon weaves a story which would leave Sherlock Holmes stumped.

Baker is supported superbly by Jack Watling, as the murderer, whose confusion is matched by that of the audience. Jean Reeve as the amorous landlady and Robert Meadwell as the policeman are stalwart scene-setters.

The Voyage of Captain Colin

On the 20th of May, 1987, Colin Baker bravely assumed command of a punt on the River Cam in beautiful Cambridge, England, following in the footsteps of Tom Baker in the unfinished *Doctor Who* story, *Shada*.

(photos © Laurie Yadon 1987)

Supported by shouts of encouragement from his courageous crew ("Watch out for the bridge!!!"), Captain Colin quickly mastered the technique of propelling and steering the strange vessel, and no more than half a dozen ducks were forced to flee for their lives in the face of his initially somewhat erratic course. He then in turn imparted his hard-won knowledge to each member of his crew, which consisted of your editor and four members of the cast and crew of *Corpse!*, and in the end all had somehow miraculously managed to avoid those mishaps most commonly encountered by fledgling punters--i.e., getting the pole stuck in the mud and/or taking an unexpected bath!

Colin was recognized by several people who passed by in other punts. One girl seemed in imminent danger of losing her pole and/or her perch on the back of her punt when she turned and exclaimed, "It's...it's..."! Several people asked why Colin was in Cambridge, and in effect he served as a floating advertisement for *Corpse!*

Remembering

Patrick Troughton
1920-1987

By now most of you will know that Patrick Troughton suffered a fatal heart attack on March 28th while he was in Columbus, Georgia, for a convention. Everyone in *Doctor Who* fandom loved both the man and his Doctor, and many share the sentiments Tom expressed upon hearing the tragic news: "Poor Pat Troughton! I didn't know him well, but he was a nice man and I'm sorry to hear he died so far from home."

Many of the *Doctor Who* clubs have printed articles recounting the circumstances of Pat's death, and most have included extensive biographical information. Since those publications are readily available to most of you, we will not duplicate their efforts here. Instead we are printing the following touching tribute, and extend our gratitude to its author for sharing it with us.

I have been privileged to know two Patrick Troughtons: Patrick the man and Patrick the Second Doctor. The latter I knew and loved long before I was fortunate enough to know and love the man. I have always believed that of all the Doctors, Patrick had the most difficult job. Until that first 'regeneration' there was no precedent for it as a concept. We all *knew* that William Hartnell was the Doctor, and that was that. Whoever's bold idea it was not to simply recast the role but to make a virtue of necessity and incorporate the recasting into the continuing fabric of the story line, by that stroke of genius called 'regeneration', is lost in the mists of time (to me). It was an inspired idea but it needed an actor of commensurate genius and inspiration, bravery and panache, to carry it off. I can quite honestly think of no one who could have accomplished that better than Patrick. That indefinable 'something' that was, is and always will be The Doctor remained at the core of his interpretation, but the exterior underwent an amazing transformation. Apparently disarmingly guileless, a walking junk-heap of disorganised mayhem, self-deprecating, affecting those delightful moments of utter dismay and panic, he lurched through space and time, not so much as the 'cosmic hobo' (an overly simple description, I believe), but more as an unlikely cross between Don Quixote and Machiavelli. It was a stunning characterisation, which at once made his successors' tasks much easier and much, much more difficult. Easier because Pat had established the concept of regeneration instantly, by virtue of his great talent and commitment, and had accordingly been accepted by the viewing millions--but more difficult because, to coin a cliche, 'Follow that!'

© BBC (Enterprises) 1984 (from *The Two Doctors*)

Patrick, the man, I have also known, off and on for some years. His son, David, and I shared a flat for some time (and I was 'best man' when he married). My impression of Pat then was and remained that of a 'gentle'man in the true sense of that word. A kind man, of strongly held principles, who felt no need to dominate others but was secure in himself, thereby of course drawing others to him like a magnet. He could also be wicked in the nicest possible way--and often was. You only have to ask Debbie Watling or Frazer Hines what it was like to work with Pat to be regaled with the most amazing and outrageous stories. Having worked with Pat and Frazer on *The Two Doctors*, I believe them!

I will remember Pat chiefly for two things. The first was his definition of acting on the stage. I had asked him about his last stage work and was astonished to learn that he had deliberately avoided work in the Theatre for many years as he didn't really enjoy all that 'shouting in the evening'--a very pithy and often accurate (if iconoclastic) view of our profession. A great antidote to the all too frequent self-important reverence that some actors assume with regard to what is pompously styled 'the legitimate theatre'--with the inescapable implication that those of us who are lucky enough to be able, occasionally, to entertain millions instead of hundreds, are somehow devoid of 'artistic parentage'.

The other thing I will remember Pat for is that he wouldn't eat the meat of an animal that he would not be able to kill himself. For him fish, chickens and rabbits were O.K.; cows, pigs and sheep weren't. A simple and honest modus vivendi.

I loved Patrick Troughton inordinately--both of him--and I shall miss him very much for a very long time. He really was too young, too good, too talented and too naughty to leave us so soon.

-- Colin Baker

LATE-BREAKING NEWS!

- For those of you who may have heard about the possibility of Colin doing several conventions in New York State in July, the tour failed to materialize.

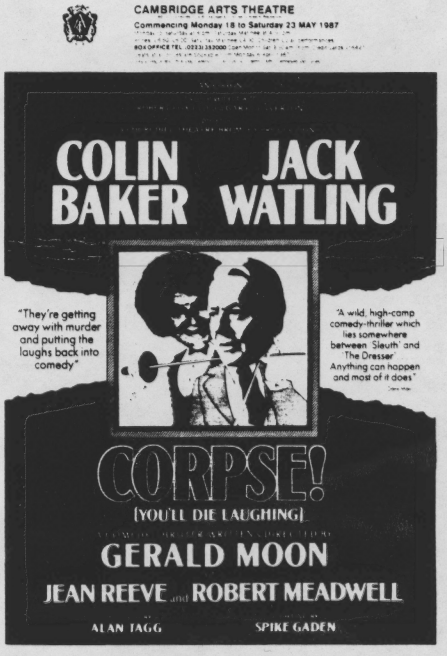
- On July 2nd Tom reported that he expects "An Inspector Calls" to run at least through August.

- Tom also mentioned that one of his cats, Garbo, is expecting a litter around August 7th, and that in that regard Garbo's daughter Brenda may soon follow in her mother's footsteps!

SPECIAL AUTOGRAPHED MERCHANDISE OFFER!

Normally Doubletalk will be eight pages in length, but there was so much information available this time that twelve pages seemed in order. However, now the club's coffers need replenishing! The proceeds from the sale of the merchandise listed below will help pay for this expanded issue.

- Five (5) "CORPSE!" posters (from the Cambridge Arts Theatre) @ $15 each. The posters are identical to the ticket flyer pictured at right except that the posters are 20" wide x 30" high. They are primarily black, with some white and a touch of red, and each has been autographed by Colin. Each poster has one crease in it (across the middle) because the theatre stored them folded in half, but they have been kept rolled since purchase and will be shipped in mailing tubes.


CAMBRIDGE ARTS THEATRE
Commencing Monday 18 to Saturday 23 MAY 1987
COLIN BAKER
JACK WATLING
"They're getting away with murder and putting the laughs back into comedy"
"A wild, high-camp comedy-thriller which lies somewhere between 'Sleuth' and 'The Dresser' Anything can happen and most of it does"
CORPSE!
(YOU'LL DIE LAUGHING)
GERALD MOON
JEAN REEVE and ROBERT MEADWELL
ALAN TAGG
SPIKE GADEN

- Five (5) programs from "An Inspector Calls" @ $10 each. Tom has autographed his photograph inside each program.

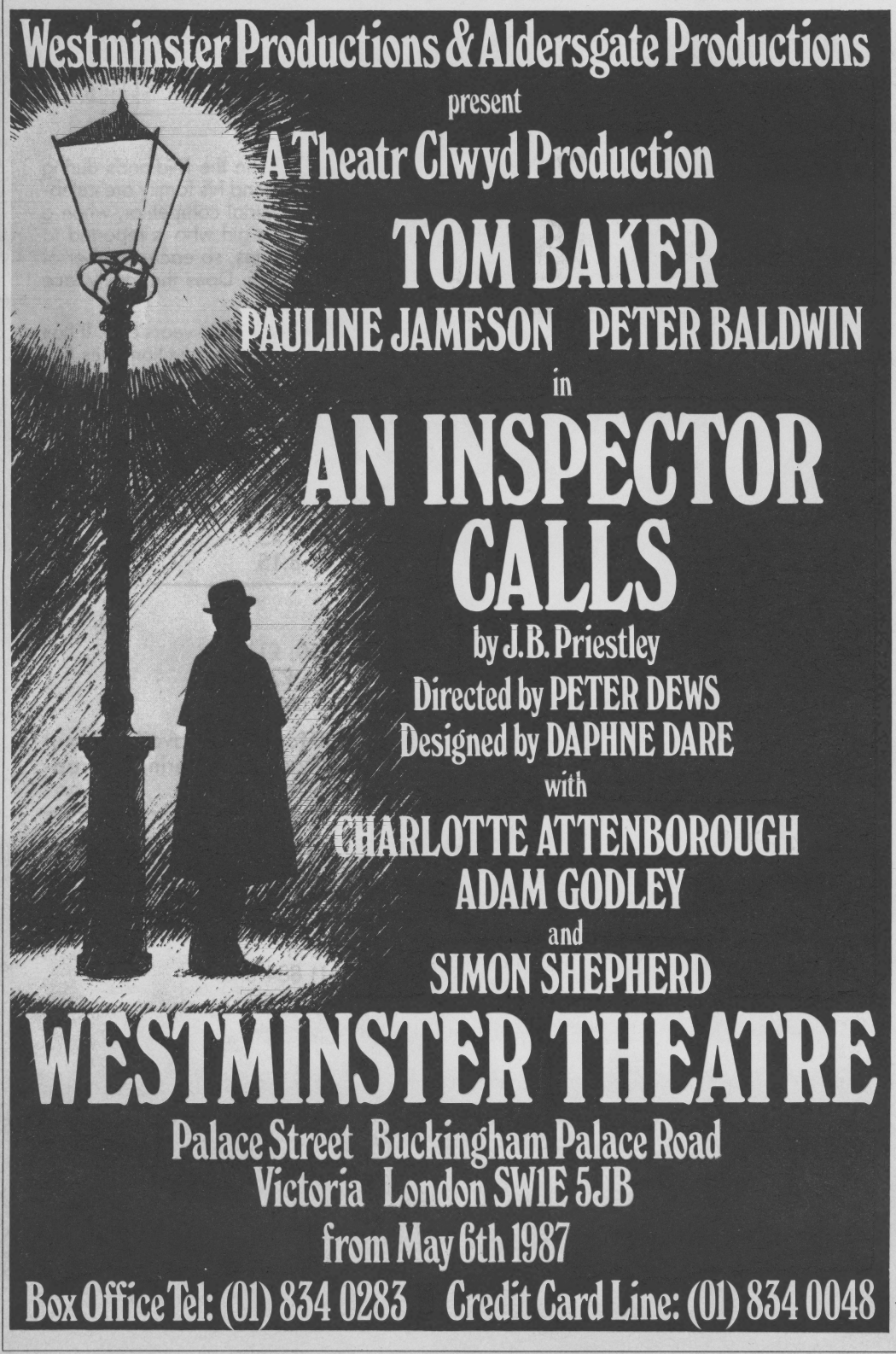
- Thirteen (13) copies of Tom's 1984 audio recording of "GREMLINS," @ $18 each. This is the original packaging and includes a 40-page, 8-1/2"x11" booklet which contains the complete text of the recording plus many color photos from the movie. Each tape has been personally autographed by Tom.

These items are available for purchase by FTCB members only. Since the quantities of these items are extremely limited, no member may order more than one of any particular item (e.g., you may order an "Inspector Calls" program and a "Gremlins" tape, but not two tapes or two programs). All prices include postage. Make checks/money orders payable to The Friends of Tom and Colin Baker. Please include an SASE with your order to make it easy to notify you if we will be unable to send you the merchandise you requested (i.e., if we receive more orders than we have items, which seems a definite possibility). First come, first served!

Doubletalk

TOM

Vol. 1, No. 1 | The newsletter of The Friends of Tom and Colin Baker | June 1987



TV ALERT!

The Life and Loves of a She-Devil is being shown on the Arts & Entertainment network! Tom appears as Father Ferguson in the last episode of this four-part program which first aired last October on BBC2. The first episode was shown here on A&E on June 27th and the remaining episodes are scheduled to air on consecutive Saturday nights, so Tom's episode should air July 18th.

She-Devil recently received a favorable write-up in *Video Review*. Here's an excerpt, as a warning for those of you who may not be familiar with the story: "There is probably something here to disturb or offend everyone--including a lascivious priest [Tom] who notes that "If we canceled the sixth and ninth commandments, I could close down the confessional tomorrow." This is *not* suitable for very young *Doctor Who* fans!

An Inspector Calls

After opening at the Theatr Clwyd in Mold, Wales, on April 14th and remaining there through May 2nd, *An Inspector Calls* moved to the Westminster Theatre in London where the first performance took place on May 6th. The theatre says the play will run until October 31st, but we recommend double-checking that before making a special trip to see it.

See inside for photos and reviews of Tom's performance as the Inspector!

THE FRIENDS OF TOM AND COLIN BAKER

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For dues of $10/year ($15/year overseas airmail), each member receives a year's subscription (four issues) of our quarterly newsletter, *Doubletalk*. Renewals are due by the last day of the month/year on your mailing label. Unless otherwise noted, checks/money orders for all memberships and merchandise should be payable to The Friends of Tom and Colin Baker.

Grounds for termination of membership include (but are not limited to) nonpayment of dues, conduct which might tend to misrepresent the club, unauthorized use of the club name, and unauthorized reproduction of club materials. All material in the newsletter is copyright to the author/artist and copyright reverts upon publication.

The Friends of Tom and Colin Baker is a member of the APC Net and the National Association of Fan Clubs.

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WHERE TO WRITE TO TOM

Tom receives so much fan mail that it must be handled by his agent's office. We print their address because it's the only one available, but please understand we can't guarantee that your mail will reach Tom or that you will receive an acknowledgment. The address is:

London Management
235/241 Regent Street
London W1A 2JT

PLEASE KEEP SENDING THOSE SASEs . . .

Enclosing an SASE when you write to request information saves us time and money and is much appreciated. (It isn't necessary if you're ordering merchandise at the same time, however, because we will usually include our response when we mail your merchandise.)

TOM-ZINE AVAILABLE

A year ago we told you about a fanzine dedicated to Tom which was in the planning stages and soliciting submissions. Lisa Jenkins, the editor of that fanzine--*The Anecdote*--says it's now available for purchase. It consists of fifty-four (54) 8.5"x11" pages of non-reduced, near-letter-quality print and contains convention reports, artwork, etc. *The Anecdote* costs $5 per copy, including postage. We haven't seen a copy yet so this should not be construed as a recommendation, but in case you'd like to contact Lisa her address is:

Lisa Jenkins
RR 2, Box 79
Wadena, MN 56482-9229

BACK ISSUES

Back issues of the newsletter are available for $1.50 each, including postage. We'll send original copies if they're available; otherwise you'll receive photocopies.

Among Friends (newsletter of The Friends of Tom Baker):

Volume 1:	Number 1	(Sept. 1983)
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	Number 3	(March 1984)
	Number 4	(June 1984)
Volume 2:	Number 1	(Sept. 1984)
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Volume 4:	Number 1	(Sept. 1986)
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TOMMERCIALS

Member Colleen Crouch in England reports having heard Tom's 'Man from Del Monte' voiceover back on TV recently, plus a new one for Scottish Widows Assurance Co. ("Assurance is what the Brits call insurance when its on people rather than property.")

A BIRTHDAY TRIBUTE TO LORD OLIVIER

On May 31st more than 1,000 actors, actresses and television personalities attended a spectacular celebration held at the National Theatre's Olivier Theatre in honor of Laurence Olivier's 80th birthday.

When Lord Olivier entered the auditorium that bears his name in the theatre he founded, a star-studded audience rose as one in an explosion of applause and cheers. Among those in attendance were Jonathan Miller, Twiggy, Cliff Richard, Anthony Hopkins, David Cassidy, Anthony Andrews, and Olivier's wife, Joan Plowright.

Actress Julia McKenzie and actor Jeremy Irons provided musical entertainment as part of the tribute, a history of the acting world written by Lord Olivier's old friends Gawn Grainger and John Mortimer. Others taking part included Dame Peggy Ashcroft, Ben Kingsley, Albert Finney, National Theatre director Sir Peter Hall...and Tom!

A week prior to the event Tom mentioned that he had been asked to participate and had been assigned five or six lines as Gloucester in a "happy ending" of *King Lear*. He went on to explain that there was a period during which it was popular to rewrite the endings of tragic plays so that they ended more pleasantly!

Tom said Joan Plowright had indicated that her husband wished to see some familiar faces from the old days. (As many of you will know, it was Laurence Olivier who invited Tom to join the National Theatre back in the 60s, and who subsequently influenced his being chosen for the role of Rasputin in *Nicholas and Alexandra*.) Tom said he was very pleased to have been asked to participate in the celebration.

Each attendee paid £30 for a ticket to the hour-long event, and £25,000 was raised to benefit acting charities. The party was held nine days after Lord Olivier's birthday, because that was the first free date the National could find.

Fear, Insecurity and Joy

International Herald Tribune, London and Paris (May 27, 1987)

By Sheridan Morley
International Herald Tribune

LONDON — J.B.Priestley's "**An Inspector Calls**," written in the winter of 1944, emerges in a new revival at the Westminster by Peter Dews as a bitter, clever, admonitory play about the unacceptable face of capitalism: "Better to ask for the earth than grab it" is its message, one that has an eerie topicality in the British election run-up. The play is set in 1912, in the home of a rich North Midlands industrialist who, as the curtain rises, is

THE LONDON STAGE

celebrating his daughter's betrothal to a scion of the local aristocracy, and his own good chance of a knighthood in the next honors list.

Suddenly, as if from nowhere, a police inspector calls with news of a girl's suicide, and most of the rest of the evening is taken up with his attempts to prove that each and every member of the family was in some way responsible for the death. Only at the last do doubts start to set in: The inspector departs as mysteriously as he arrived, leaving the family to realize that he did not belong to a local force and that during his investigation he never showed his picture of the girl to more than one family member at a time. So although all he said about their behavior was true, it could have related to different girls, none of whom is necessarily dead. But in that case who was he and why did he call? As the family ponders, a phone rings with news of an actual death, and we are almost back into one of Priestley's more famous time plays.

But "An Inspector Calls" is really a cliff-hanger, and when one gets built as well as this you don't have to worry too much about which cliff you are hanging onto. Whether the inspector is there for death or guilt or revenge doesn't really matter as much as Priestley's expertly plotted and planted thoughts about responsibility and being our brothers' keepers. The inspector's parting diatribe ("If men will not learn to help each other, then they will be taught that lesson in fire and blood and anguish.") remains as chilling now as when it was first written, and, by its setting in the year of the launch of the Titanic, the play has a terrible kind of moral warning about over-confidence. Peter Dews's production has cut it to a brisk two hours, and Tom Baker as the inspector manages the right balance of the sinister and the cynical up against the cascading middle-class immorality of the family he has come to terrify.

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The Times, London (May 16, 1987)

THEATRE

An Inspector Calls
Westminster

J.B. Priestley knew how to put together a play with a message. He never over-estimated the brightness of his audience, and having told us what he is going to do, he plainly does it and then reminds us of what he has done.

And if he draws attention to his points with all emphasis at his disposal – short of ominous chords and Baedeker's three stars – in his prime, as in this evergreen, the way he hauls the guilty past into the nervous present brings a joy that is like watching a favourite uncle pull out of a hat all the rabbits you were hoping for, followed by something you had not expected at all – like a wedding cake, or a thump in the kidneys.

This play is the one in which a complacent family is celebrating the daughter's engagement to a proper gentleman (Simon Shepherd), enjoying a world – 1913 – where everything is for the best. Out of the blue an inspector calls; a young girl has killed herself; he would like to ask some questions.

Starting with Peter Baldwin's pompous father, all five members of the family are revealed as having played a part in her downfall. The action could be played without a break, although in this production by Peter Dews, the interval comes after the mother, an imperious Pauline Jameson, denounces the still unidentified seducer of the girl just as the door opens and the absent member of the family totters drunkenly in.

Tom Baker, tall and slow-moving, looking down his long nose, leaning forward very slightly like a large bird that has caught sight of an emerging but unpalatable worm, brings steel and authority to the all-knowing inspector.

Adam Godley gives a finely-poised, nervy performance as the son, and Charlotte Attenborough's intensity of gaze and passion make the playing of the daughter, an instant convert to penitence, an unanticipated pleasure.

Jeremy Kingston

LONDON THEATRE by Lindsay Cook

Dr. Who–dunnit

Yorkshire Post
(May 19, 1987)

An Inspector Calls: Westminster Theatre

A WHODUNNIT should leave you guessing — but J. B. Priestley's An Inspector Calls successfully achieves the impossible.

You know from pretty early on that *everybody* dunnit, yet still you remain on the edge of your seat.

It must have been hard for an audience in 1945 to swallow the socialist message of this play — the "haves" in capitalist society are responsible for the "have nots" in ways they cannot realise.

Today society is still divided and the lesson that the Birlings are taught is still valid in a country with three million unemployed and thousands of homeless families.

This production from Theatr Clwyd brings home its relevance with a strong cast led by Tom Baker as the mysterious inspector, who knows that each of the family shares the guilt when a young woman commits suicide.

He keeps a distance while interrogating deeply and thoroughly into their unforgivable use of the woman whose death he is investigating.

It is a masterly and persuasive performance as the supernatural sleuth, from the actor who is still best remembered for playing Dr. Who.

Peter Baldwin is a fine Arthur Birling, a pompous blustering, bullying and chauvinistic businessman who thinks he knows all that the world will offer during his lifetime.

His mistaken predictions on peace and the future of the Titanic show what a shallow man he is.

His grande dame wife, played by Pauline Jameson, has perhaps too many airs and graces, but still gives a delightful performance when she refuses to accept responsibility for her own lack of charity.

The youngsters, particularly Charlotte Attenborough and Adam Godley as the Birling offspring, who genuinely develop a conscience, keep the play vital and interesting when all has been revealed, especially when their parents start to backslide.

Tightly directed by Peter Dews, the play has a cluttered and dingy set, complete with former Lord Mayor Birling in portrait form, from Daphne Dare.

The time is appropriate for this revival and the production worthy of a visit.

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Here are excerpts from several additional reviews of *An Inspector Calls*:

"Tom Baker plays the Inspector as a dour avenging angel, creating an enigmatic figure strong enough to cast a shadow over all, even when he has long exited." (*The Methodist Recorder*, May 28, 1987)

"...we do like to see the undeserving rich get their just desserts and Tom Baker as the copper from outer space rips into them with the smile of a tiger." (*Jewish Chronicle*, London, May 22, 1987)

"Tom Baker's mysterious Inspector derives an impudent glee from the discomfort he causes..." (*Spectator*, May 30, 1987)

"Tom Baker was the best Dr. Who of the long running series, so the playfully enigmatic Time Lord would seem to be a natural for the mysterious Inspector Goole who could stir consciences and time with equal facility. There were frequent occasions during the play when Tom Baker's predatory smile, like an alligator's on seeing dinner bathing on the river banks, was highly appropriate. He moved with ease from quiet dignity in the face of attempted snubs, to a peremptory assertiveness as he made his points and gained control of the gathering." (*Plays and Players*, June 1987)

"Tom Baker gives a superb performance as the Inspector and is backed by an excellent cast in another imaginative production by Aldersgate." (*Church of England Newspaper*, May 22, 1987)

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The Independent, London (May 16, 1987)

Thoroughly moral melodrama

An Inspector Calls
Westminster Theatre
Andrew Rissik

A ROCK-SOLID, excellently acted new production is the best reason for seeing J B Priestley's engaging old warhorse, *An Inspector Calls*. In a mildly disgruntled programme note, Priestley explains that, at its opening in 1946, *An Inspector Calls* "was most sourly noticed". It is not hard to see why.

Priestley's play is a creaky moral mystery, a sort of sermon in three acts with the homiletic speeches evenly distributed among a cast of six. Although it begins as a detective story, set in the home of a wealthy industrialist just before the Great War, this drama means to instruct and edify in the most overtly pious way, and its protagonist might just as well be called Inspector Do-As-You-Would-Be-Done-By.

An Inspector Calls gets its educative, philanthropic morality from the most sentimental aspects of Dickens, and its taste for sombre supernatural melodrama from J W Dunne's portentous and once-fashionable meditations on the nature of time. One admires Priestley's high-minded altruism, and the genial intelligence with which he entertains, but one does wish that he had been a less rudimentary playwright. The one authentic voice, which sounds again and again, is Priestley's and he has none of Shaw's ability to contradict himself. The Inspector is God, saying what Priestley might have liked God to say, and the other characters are all Priestleys, agreeing with God. Once one has surrendered to the daftness of this and begun to laugh, it is possible to enjoy the evening as thoroughly as a good, brisk Sherlock Holmes adventure.

Tom Baker plays the enigmatic Inspector Goole as a softly menacing spiritual inquisitor. If, at first, his performance seems a shade too remote and quizzical, there are good reasons for it, and he is being superbly faithful to his writer. Baker was once an exceptionally arresting Dr Who, as he is no doubt tired of being told. But this performance suggests that he will soon be an outstanding Ralph Richardson: sly, unpredictable, sinister and humane.

Charlotte Attenborough does wonders with the role of the conscience-stricken young heroine, whom she manages to make both likeable and shrewd, and Adam Godley rescues the ne'er-do-well son of the industrialist from nearly all of its potential melodramatic clichés. Priestley's writing is often insipid or banal, but the cast treat it as seriously as Chekhov, and continually compell our attention. Peter Dews directs with discreet expertise, going for pace and tension where a less experienced craftsman might have preferred the embalming fluid of period atmosphere.

☐ *An Inspector Calls continues at the Westminster Theatre (Box office 01-834 0283).*